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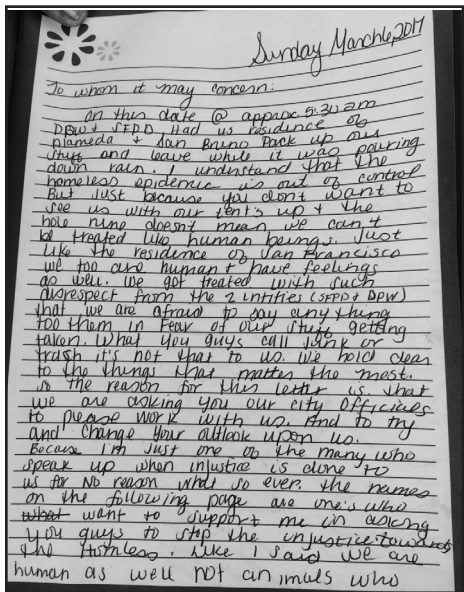
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“JUST BECAUSE YOU DON’T WANT TO SEE US DOESN’T MEAN YOU CAN’T TREAT US LIKE HUMAN BEINGS”



Homeless encampments continue to be displaced by the San Francisco Police Department, the Department of Public Works, private security and others. Encampment residents are told to move along, but have nowhere else to go, with an adult shelter waiting list consistently over 1,000 people long.

One woman living in an encampment has something to say about it. Shyenene “Shy” Brown, whose encampment on San Bruno Avenue was swept in early March, left a powerful letter to those who swept her encampment in the pouring rain:

To Whom it May Concern,

On this date at approximately 5:30 a.m. DPW and SFPD had us residents of Alameda and San Bruno, pack up our stuff and leave while it was pouring down rain. I understand that the homeless epidemic is out of control, but just because you don’t want to see us with our tents up and the whole nine, doesn’t mean we can’t be treated like human beings. Just like the residents of San Francisco, we too are human and have feelings as well.

We got treated with such disrespect from the 2 entities [SFPD and Public Works] that we are afraid to say anything to them in fear of our stuff getting taken. What you guys call junk or trash is not that to us. We hold dear to the things that matter most. So the reason for this letter is that we are asking you, our city officials, to please work with us. And to try and change your outlook upon us. Because I’m just one of the many who speak up when injustice is done to us for no reason whatsoever.

The names on the following page are one’s who want to support me in asking you guys to stop the injustice towards the homeless. Like I said we are human as well not animals who

Like I said, we are human as well, not animals who need training. Thank you for listening and reading this letter.

Sincerely yours,
Shyenene Brown

During the encampment sweep of more than thirty tents, displacing over thirty people, Shy’s husband was arrested by police on a warrant. Although she explained that the court date was set for the following day, they still took him away. That left her to move all of their belongings by herself in the rain. It also left her much more vulnerable and unprotected as a woman on the streets.

“I can’t do this by myself. It’s ten times harder to be a woman than a man on the streets,” Shy says.

The constant displacement—many during early morning hours and harsh weather conditions—from one area of the city to another is extremely traumatic for encampment residents.

“I’m really physically, emotionally stressed out,” says Shy. “The disrespect from DPW, the police, everyone that has to deal with them. I’m just tired. I’m trying to get my point across. In their minds, I’m nobody.”

During encampment sweeps, homeless residents often have their personal belongings taken away, including medicine, items for health care needs, and sentimental possessions. Currently, the Lawyer’s Committee for Civil Rights is filing a lawsuit against CalTrans for destroying and confiscating people’s personal belongings.

“Even though DPW wants the streets clean, they take our personal belongings and throwing them away—you’re taking our personal belongings that we’ve had for years. And you don’t have nothing to give us back,” says Shy’s brother, who is also an encampment resident.

What he says rings true for many. While the City tried to improve its encampment protocol with an Encampment Resolution Team led by social worker Jason Albertson, there is still no housing that is being offered.

This cycle of moving people from place to place is best exemplified by one of the more visible sweeps that occurred earlier this year with the Box City encampment. While most of the residents were offered shelter at the Navigation Center, many of those were only offered 30 days there, some with an extension.

Human Rights Organizer Kelley Cutler at the Coalition on Homelessness chatted with one of the former Box City residents during her street outreach. The resident had entered the Navigation

Center, but then was discharged—and forced to live on the streets again. She was placed onto another waitlist for shelter for a 90-day bed, still with no offer of housing.

The City has also begun to put up metal barricades to discourage people from sleeping or pitching a tent in the same area. According to Cutler, the barricades have been increasingly appearing around the city and are the opposite of a solution to homelessness.

These barricades also make it difficult for people to use the sidewalks, especially for people with disabilities. Resources should be going into housing and social services, rather than blocking off public spaces. ■

If you see an encampment sweep, document it. Take videos, photos, or notes and notify the Coalition on Homelessness’s human rights organizers at human-rights@cohsf.org.



HOMELESS ENCAMPMENTS SWEEPS WATCH TRAINING

When: Wednesday, March 29 from 5:30-6:30pm
Where: Coalition on Homelessness, 468 Turk Street between Larkin & Hyde

Learn how to respond to ongoing homeless encampment sweeps happening in our San Francisco community. Homeless people are told to “Move along” by SFPD, DPW, and private security, and others, but there is nowhere to move along to, with city shelters at a consistent 1000-person long waitlist. The hour-long training will consist of a ‘Know your rights’ training... what to do and not to do during sweeps so that you can be an ally to homeless people trying to survive on the streets.

Questions? Contact Human Rights Organizer, Kelley Cutler, at kcutler@cohsf.org

COALITION ON HOMELESSNESS

The STREET SHEET is a project of the Coalition on Homelessness. The Coalition on Homelessness organizes poor and homeless people to create permanent solutions to poverty while protecting the civil and human rights of those forced to remain on the streets.

Our organizing is based on extensive peer outreach, and the information gathered directly drives the Coalition’s work. We do not bring our agenda to poor and homeless people: They bring their agenda to us. We then turn that agenda into powerful campaigns that are fleshed out at our work group meetings, where homeless people come together with their other community allies to win housing and human rights for all homeless and poor people.

WORKGROUP MEETINGS

AT 468 TURK STREET

HOUSING JUSTICE WORK GROUP	Every Tuesday at noon
The Housing Justice Workgroup is working toward a San Francisco in which every human being can have and maintain decent, habitable, safe, and secure housing. This meeting is in English and Spanish and open to everyone! Contact: Miguel Carrera, mcarrera@cohsf.org	
HUMAN RIGHTS WORK GROUP	Every Wednesday at 12:30 p.m.
The Human Rights Workgroup has been doing some serious heavy lifting on these issues: conducting direct research, outreach to people on the streets, running multiple campaigns, developing policy, staging direct actions, capturing media attention, and so much more. All those down for the cause are welcome to join! Contact: Dayton Andrews: dandrews@cohsf.org	

To learn more about COH workgroup meetings, contact us at : 415-346-3740, or go at : www.cohsf.org

STREET SHEET STAFF

The Street Sheet is a publication of the Coalition on Homelessness. Some stories are collectively written, and some stories have individual authors. But whoever sets fingers to keyboard, all stories are formed by the collective work of dozens of volunteers, and our outreach to hundreds of homeless people.

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POETS	

“I AM NOT FREE WHILE ANY WOMAN IS UNFREE, EVEN IF HER SHACKLES LOOK DIFFERENT FROM MY OWN.” - AUDRE LORDE

SABRINA: “THIS IS MY FINAL STAND OF WARRIORISM AS A MOTHER AND A WOMAN.”

I am 38 years old. I was born and raised here in San Francisco Hayes Valley, Fillmore. I have three kids. I also taught my kids before our life took a left turn about 2 and a half years ago. I have been homeless ever since. I was in a really bad relationship domestically, physically, socially, and emotionally. My kids were illegally taken from me by CPS. I really don't know what's going on; I don't know where they are.

I've come to the Street Sheet and so far it's kept me alive. I felt almost dead. And as soon as I took the job selling the Street Sheet newspaper it has made such a big difference in my life. It keeps money in my pocket every day and when I am no longer homeless, I will still work with the paper. I will still use every dime that I can to give back to the paper. Whatever I can do to make the Street Sheet stronger because I really believe in it. I think it's a powerful tool and it's become a powerful tool in my life. It brings tears to my eyes. What a difference it's made for me and what it will have made for my children.

I would never willingly separate from my children. I love them so much. They mean everything to me. This is my final stand of warriorism as a mother and a woman and I cannot let anyone take that from me. It is extremely difficult to know that you have children out there and to see that they're running around with crystal meth at nine years old. It is wrong.

CPS haven't followed up on anything. I don't understand. They don't take me seriously now. I'm trying so hard, reading all of these books on how to not become part of bad situations. All of these books I've been reading just to make sure that this doesn't ever happen again in my life. One time is enough. I can't take it anymore. I work very hard for my money and I am not going for any B.S. and I'm tired of just surviving. I don't want my kids to think that the way they're living right now is the right way to live. The main fight is to get my kids back and get them protected inside of a home, a stable home. Once I get this house I can regain stability and get my kids back. I will be blessed again when I have my kids back. When everything is back to normal I will finish up my degree so I can maybe become a police officer and make sure that I can help people and make sure this kind of thing doesn't happen to anyone else. No matter how old I am. Put it this way: I should be dead. Nobody survives this long by themselves but I love my kids and I'm not gonna let them die and they're not gonna let me die. And we deserve each other. ■



JACKIE JENKS, HOMELESS ADVOCATE, DISPLACED FROM SAN FRANCISCO

Jackie stood up to developers building skyrises in the Tenderloin—working tirelessly to stave off the impacts of gentrification in the Tenderloin, and forcing developers to provide housing to poor community members.

She led Hospitality House with great integrity, realizing its commitment to empowerment within the organization, and starting a community organizing division. As Director she was serious about bringing folks from the Tenderloin streets into employment, and leadership roles in the organization. She always said that takes commitment and resources, and the results have been amazing. Hospitality House reflects the community up and down its ranks: in diversity, in class, in life experience. The result is a fantastic cornerstone organization that truly serves people, empowers people, houses and shelters people, employs people and treats people with dignity and respect.

The city of San Francisco has been truly blessed to call Jackie one of our own beloved leaders. ■

Kickin' Ass for the Working Class
Celebrating your twenty years of trailblazing work at Hospitality House, honoring your decades of dedicated service to the Tenderloin and Central Market neighborhoods, recognizing your fearless advocacy on behalf of all San Franciscans, and gratefully acknowledging your unflinching commitment to justice, equality, and a City that remains affordable to all.

JENNIFER FRIEDENBACH

The struggle for homeless and housing justice lost a true warrior today, with the displacement of Jackie Jenks. After giving birth to her third son, she found her cramped apartment and new, hip child-unfriendly neighbors just too much to bear. She is moving out of state.

To describe the loss, one can only describe her contributions and imagine just how many more contributions could have come to fruition if only she were here.

Jackie is a 22-year Hospitality House veteran who began her employment with the agency in 1995 as an Employment Counselor.



She has held many positions during her tenure at Hospitality House and was promoted to her current position after a five-year post as director for the Shelter Program. I first met Jackie when she first started, around the same time I did. Looking back, we were practically children.

Jackie ushered the agency through many a rough patches. She was part of a massive restructuring that then Coalition on Homelessness Director, Paul Boden, was part of. She faced down the City as they tried to cut the agency, close their self-help center, and fought against multiple other attacks for five years in a row during the great recession. She beat back almost all of those cuts.

As part of her role at Hospitality House, the organization became one of very few nonprofits that stood up against attacks on homeless people's civil rights. Jackie always had her priorities straight. She was less worried about retribution, and more worried about how her community would be negatively affected in every situation. Under Jackie's leadership, Hospitality House always stood up to the man when the man was wronging the people.

I first met Jackie in that capacity, as she was a member of our newly formed California Civil Rights Coalition. It was wonderful to have a frontline service provider, already stretched from a demanding job, take the time out to work to protect the civil rights of homeless people. When I first met Jackie, I instantly fell in love, and have had a two decade long friend affair ever since. Her skills are subtle, her power nearly undetectable, but it is present in a steady, effective way. Like al-

most all who have made tremendous contributions to the struggle, she knows it is the behind the scenes nitty gritty work that makes things happen. Change is hard work, and Jackie is a top of the hill hard worker.

Jackie was deeply involved in struggles around the city budget, not just to defend cuts to her own organization but to fight against other cuts to all poor people, and to struggle for more resources for destitute San Franciscans. Jackie always works for the collective good—not just for herself or her own agency, but for all destitute people. This feminine quality—to do tough work humbly without regards for self—is somewhat common. But Jackie, as a mother, a director and a mentor, was a master at it and made it an art form. We took notice.

She was increasingly frustrated with the pitting of organizations against each other, and came up with the idea of forming a homeless providers association. The idea was to join the providers with the Coalition on Homelessness to formulate one large powerful alliance. Powerful it did become.

The group was known as the Homeless Emergency Service Providers association, and now has 28 members. It worked on effecting policy and garnering budget dollars to alleviate homelessness. Over five years, it successfully fought for and won almost \$26 million for housing, prevention and shelter. No longer could the City get away with pitting groups against each other. We were one voice—homeless people and providers.

Jackie was a leader in every realm she sat in. She was on the Steering Committee of the San Francisco Human Services Network, and she was the co-chair for Market Street for the Masses as well as the Homeless Employment Collaborative. She also serves as Secretary for the Board of the Community Housing Partnership.



HANIFA DOOSTI (CENTER), 17, AND OTHER STUDENTS OF THE SHAOLIN WUSHU CLUB SHOW THEIR WUSHU SKILLS TO OTHER STUDENTS ON A HILLTOP IN KABUL, AFGHANISTAN. PHOTOS BY MOHAMMAD ISMAIL.



STUDENTS OF THE SHAOLIN WUSHU CLUB CHAT BEFORE AN EXERCISE IN KABUL, AFGHANISTAN.

THE AFGHAN GIRLS FIGHTING PREJUDICE WITH MARTIAL ARTS

MOHAMMAD AZIZ

On a snowy mountaintop to the west of Kabul, a group of Afghan girls practise the flowing movements of Wushu, a sport developed from ancient Chinese kung fu martial arts, stretching and bending and slashing the air with bright swords.

In a country where women's sport is severely restricted, the Shaolin Wushu club in a part of Kabul that is home to the capital's Hazara ethnic community, is a rare exception.

Sima Azimi, the 20-year-old leading the practice session, says Wushu teaches self-defence, but just as important, "it's really effective for body and soul".

She learned the sport in Iran, where she won a gold and bronze medal in competition, and she has been teaching in Kabul for about a year, encouraged by her father, with whom she trains at the club's gym.

"I am working with Afghan girls to strengthen their abilities and I love to see Afghan girls improve the way other girls have improved in the world," she said.

"My ambition is to see my students take part in international matches and win medals for their country."

Martial arts of all kinds are popular in Afghanistan, but it is a notoriously hard country for women, and the girls of the Shaolin Wushu club face regular harassment and abuse in addition to the

normal dangers of life in Kabul.

"The biggest challenge we face is insecurity," said 18-year-old Zahra Timori. "Most of the time, we can't go to the club due to insecurity."

Her friend Shakila Muradi said she hoped that sport could help create a more peaceful climate in Afghanistan in defiance of the daily reality the girls face.

"There are many people harassing us but we ignore them and follow our goals," she said.

When possible, training goes on in a gym dominated by a poster of Hussain Sadiqi, a Hazara martial arts champion who fled to Australia in 1999 and later worked as a film stuntman.

So far, all the girls in the club are Hazara, a Persian-speaking, mainly Shi'ite group who have faced a series of attacks claimed by Islamic State militants over the past year.

Their generally more liberal social traditions give the girls more room to move outside the home and practise sports but Sima's father, Rahmatullah Azimi says he hopes to see girls from other ethnic groups join in as well.

He said he worries about his daughter's safety but said it was a joy to see her train other girls.

"I am really happy that I helped, encouraged and supported Sima," he said. ■



PHOTO BY MARCOS BRINDICCI

ARGENTINIAN WOMEN STAGE

Dozens of topless women, joined by hundred of fully clothed protesters, demonstrated in Buenos Aires on Tuesday to demand the right to sunbathe semi-nude on February 7 to demand the right to sunbathe semi-nude after police asked bare-breasted women to leave a nearby beach.

Smaller protests have occurred throughout the country in recent weeks in response to the January incident and it remains unclear if Argentine law allows women to go topless on public beaches.

Police cited a national criminal code article prohibiting "obscene displays" to justify asking the women to leave the beach, although at least one judge ruled after the incident that going topless was not a crime.

NICARAGUAN WOMEN PUSH FOR ACCESS TO FARMLAND, AND PROSPERITY

JOSÉ ADÁN SILVA

A group of women farmers who organised to fight a centuries-old monopoly over land ownership by men are seeking plots of land to farm in order to contribute to the food security of their families and of the population at large.

Matilde Rocha, vice president of the Federation of Nicaraguan Women Farmers Cooperatives (Femuprocan), told IPS that since the late 1980s, when women trained in the Sandinista revolution organised to form cooperatives, access to land has been one of the movement's main demands.

According to Rocha, as of 1997, the organization has worked in a coordinated manner to fight for recognition of the rights of women farmers not only with regard to agriculture, but also to economic, political and social rights.

Femuprocan, together with 14 other associations, successfully pushed for the 2010 approval of the Fund for the Purchase of Land with Gender Equity for Rural Women Law, known as Law 717.

They also contributed to the incorporation of a gender equity focus in the General Law on Cooperatives and to the participation of women in the Municipal Commissions on Food Security and Sovereignty.

For Rocha, this advocacy has allowed rural women to update the mapping of actors in the main productive areas in the country, strengthen the skills of women farmers and train them in social communication and as promoters of women's human rights, to tap into resources and take decisions without the pressure of their male partners.

"For rural women, land is life, it is vital for the family; land ownership and inputs to make it productive are closely linked to women's economic empowerment, to decision-making about food production, to the preservation of our environment, and to ensuring food security and protecting our native seeds to avoid dependence on genetically modified seeds," said Rocha.

Femuprocan is the only federation in the country solely made up of women farmers: More than 4,200 members organized in 73 cooperatives in six of the country's departments, including Madriz, Managua, Granada, Región Autónoma del Caribe Norte, Matagalpa and Jinotega.

Rocha believes the progress made has been more qualitative than quantitative.

In 2010, when they pushed through Law 717, an estimated 1.1 million women lived in rural areas, and most of them owned neither land nor other assets.

The law was aimed at giving rural women access to physical possession and legal ownership of land, improving their economic conditions,



JOSEFINA RODRÍGUEZ, ONE OF THE 18 PERCENT OF WOMEN FARMERS IN NICARAGUA WHO OWN THE LAND THAT THEY WORK. THE FUND CREATED SIX YEARS AGO TO PROMOTE THE PURCHASE OF LAND BY RURAL WOMEN STILL LACKS THE REQUIRED RESOURCES TO MEET ITS GOALS. PHOTO BY ISMAEL LÓPEZ.

boosting gender equity, ensuring food security and fighting poverty in the country, estimated at the time at 47 percent.

Nicaragua currently has a population of 6.2 million, 51 per cent of whom are women, and 41 percent of whom live in rural areas, according to World Bank figures.

Data from the Household Survey to Measure Poverty in Nicaragua, published in June by the International Foundation for Global Economic Challenge, indicates that 39 percent of the population was poor in 2015.

The poverty rate in urban areas was 22.1 percent, compared to 58.8 percent in rural areas.

According to the international humanitarian organisation Oxfam, only 18 percent of the rural women who work on farms in Nicaragua own land, while the rest have to lease it and pay before planting.

"Access to land ownership is a pending de-

mand for 40 percent of the members of Femuprocan, which represents a total of 1,680 women without land," said Rocha.

The struggle for access to land is an uphill battle, but the organisation is not giving up.

"In 17 municipalities covered by our federation, 620 women are active in the process of searching for lands for our members. Not only women who have no land, but also women who do are engaged in the process of identifying lands to make them productive, as are other governmental and non-governmental organisations," she said.

One of the members of the organisation told IPS that there has been no political will or economic financing from the state to enforce the law on access to land.

"How many doors have we knocked on, how many offices have we visited to lobby, how many meetings have we held...and the law is still not

enforced," said the farmer, who asked to be identified only as Maria, during a trip to Managua.

"The problem is that the entire legal, economic and productive system is still dominated by men, and they see us as threats, more than competition, to their traditional business activities," she said.

Other women's organisations have come from rural areas to the cities to protest that the law on access to land is not being enforced.

In May, María Teresa Fernández, who heads the Coordinator of Rural Women, complained in Managua that "women who do not own land have to pay up to 200 dollars to rent one hectare during the growing season."

In addition to having to lease land, the women who belong to the organisation have in recent years faced environmental problems such as drought, dust storms, volcanic ash and pests without receiving the benefit of public policies that make bank loans available to deal with these problems.

"Six years ago, Law 717 was passed, ordering the creation of a gender equity fund for the purchase of land by rural women. But this fund has not yet been included in the general budget in order for women to access mortgage credits administered by the state bank, to get their own land," Fernández complained in May.

The Nicaraguan financial system does not grant loans to women farmers who have no legal title to land, a problem that the government has tried to mitigate with social welfare programmes such as Zero Hunger, Zero Usury, Roof Plan, Healthy Yards and the Christian Solidarity Programme for food distribution, among others.

However, sociologist Cirilo Otero, director of the non-governmental Centre of Initiatives for Environmental Policies, said there is not enough government support, and stressed to IPS that women's lack of access to land is one of the most serious problems of gender inequality in Nicaragua.

"It is still an outstanding debt by the state towards women farmers," he said.

Nevertheless, data from the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) indicates that Nicaragua was one of 17 Latin American countries that met the targets for hunger reduction and improvement in food security in the first 15 years of the century, as part of the Millennium Development Goals.

According to the U.N. agency, between 1990 and 2015, the country reduced the proportion of undernourished people from 54.4 per cent to 16.6 percent. ■

Courtesy of Inter Press Service / INSP.ngo

TOPLESS PROTEST TO CLAIM RIGHTS

Arguing that women should have the same right as men to sunbathe topless, the women chanted, painted slogans on their bodies, and held signs reading: "The only breasts that bother them are the ones that aren't for sale."

The demonstration in downtown Buenos Aires followed the "Not One Less" protests late last year in which tens of thousands of Argentines protested gender-related violence after the rape and killing of a 16-year-old girl.

The protesters said the incident on the beach exemplified social inequality be-

tween men and women in Argentina.

"In many places, when a woman reports gender violence, they don't listen, but when a woman shows her breasts, they send so many police," said Grace Prounesti Piquet, a 33-year-old photographer with the words "The breast is not a crime" painted on her back. "It's a shame."

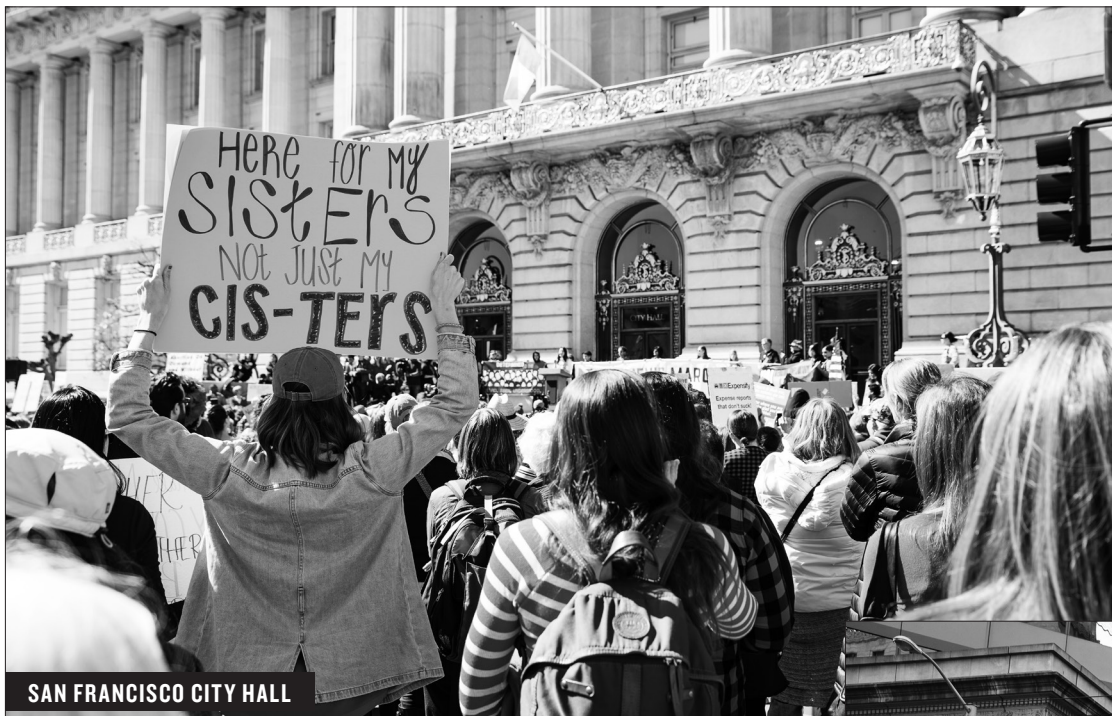
The protest drew a large number of male gawkers, prompting chants of "Get out" from women demonstrators. ■

Courtesy of Reuters/INSP.ngo



PHOTO BY MARCOS BRINDICCI

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY



SAN FRANCISCO CITY HALL

On March 8th, International Women's Day was celebrated in the Bay Area, from a rally in front of City Hall and Justin Herman Plaza in San Francisco to Frank Ogawa Plaza in Oakland. International Women's Day was accompanied by a nation-wide general strike, "Day Without a Woman."

Photos by Adam Wold.



FRANK OGAWA PLAZA



FRANK OGAWA PLAZA



JUSTIN HERMAN PLAZA

RAVEN CANON: AN INDESPENSIBLE LIFE

TIM HARRIS

If suffering were an Olympic sport, Raven Canon would be a gold medalist. She was born in 1976 with her intestines outside her body, and came into this world facing surgeries, poverty, eating problems, and eventually, addiction and two decades of on and off homelessness.

She took all of that and turned it into her superpower. When I met Raven, she was still homeless, nearly a year sober, and all about helping others.

Raven's morning routine was to strike her tent, bundle her gear and other belongings in a tarp, and go do her rounds: tending to her own survival needs, checking up on those worse off than herself and sharing her strength.

She called me last December. Inspired by Real Change, Seattle's street newspaper, she was launching Colorado Springs' first street paper. Raven wanted my help and support.

I was awed by her will and audacity, gave her my cell number and said to call any time. She did.

When the first issue of The Springs Echo came out in January, the eight-page tabloid became the newest member of the International Network of Street Papers. Raven suddenly became the most visible homeless advocate in Colorado Springs.

Off the street, staying with a friend and finding her legs as an emerging leader, Raven appeared frequently on the local



PHOTO BY MARK REIS

news, meeting with local leaders, organizing, publishing and channeling a lifetime of hurt.

But the pressures were mounting. Raven ran on a survivor's cocktail of cortisol and adrenaline. Local events weren't helping. As Colorado Springs' newest and most visible homeless advocate, she found herself at the center of a familiar story.

Public begging had just been outlawed. The Mayor, capitalizing on the tourism potential of nearby year-round elite athlete training slopes, was rebranding Colorado Springs as "Olympic City."

The writing was on the wall for homeless folks. Encampment sweeps were escalating and promised to get more ugly. There was room, the Mayor said, for every homeless person outside to come indoors if they

only wanted.

Raven was apoplectic at the lie and estimated that the Colorado Springs shelters were short about 1,000 beds.

The Mayor's statement, I advised, was straight from the fraudulent municipal compassion playbook. "He will keep saying that," I said, "They always do. And yes, it will make you crazy. Get used to that."

We talked about how to organize. How to call out the well-worn narratives of filth and contagion that reduce people to garbage. The rhetoric of human feces, urine, trash and hypodermic needles. The triggers cities routinely use to provoke disgust and justify abandonment.

Raven was rallying the troops, gearing up for the fight of her life.

Then, on March 2nd, I got a text. "Tim I

am sorry to bother you but am in a personal crisis. I have to go back to living in a tent. I could desperately use your advice."

When we spoke, Raven thought she could make her living situation work a little longer, but she might have to walk away from the Echo for a while. I said her crisis needed to come first.

I thought she'd be ok. The elasticity of her capacity for survival seemed boundless. It was not.

Less than two days later, Raven was found dead at 9:30 a.m., wrapped in a blanket beneath an overpass. She was the ninth person to die outside in Colorado Springs over the past year.

In her advocate role, Raven was fond of quoting Catholic philosopher Sir Thomas More. "You have to realize that we are human," she would say, "and that we all must do more to help." Then, in the cadences of a well-memorized poem, the archaic lines from More would flow.

"For if you suffer your people to be ill-educated, and their manners to be corrupted from their infancy, and then punish them for those crimes to which their first education disposed them, what else is to be concluded from this, but that you first make thieves and then punish them."

Some 500 years after, we're up to the same tricks. We throw people away, and then blame them for their misery. Raven's life and death is a challenge for us all to be our better angels. ■

Tim Harris is executive director of the Real Change Homeless Empowerment Project, which publishes Real Change News.

JUSTICE FOR AMILCAR PEREZ-LOPEZ



AMILCAR PEREZ-LOPEZ

GIANNI JONES

On February 27, 2017, community members, faith leaders, advocates, and public officials gathered to observe the second anniversary of the slaying of Amilcar Perez-Lopez. An undocumented migrant from Guatemala, Amilcar was shot in the back six times by the San Francisco Police Department on February 26, 2015. He came to America hoping to live out the “American Dream,” earn money and help take care of his family. It’s important that the public be aware of the story of Amilcar Perez-Lopez so that there can be effective measures in bringing justice to him and his family. Furthermore, let’s celebrate the life of Amilcar and work towards changing interactions between law enforcement and the public to stop further tragic deaths such as Amilcar’s from happening.

Amilcar came to the U.S. when he was 17 years old from Guatemala. He is described by his friends as a hard worker and mild-mannered man who worked in construction and installing heating systems. Although issues of homelessness and poverty were a reality for Amilcar, he remained generous towards others. Ultimately, Amilcar—like so many of us—wanted to help his family, but his life was tragically taken at the hands of the police.

What happens when the designated law enforcers of our communities seemingly violate the community’s trust by killing a person such as Amilcar?

It’s difficult for civilians to justify shooting someone in the back of the body six times, but apparently that doesn’t apply to SFPD. The details of Amilcar’s death vary. Initially, SFPD stated that Amilcar

lunged at the plain-clothed officers with a weapon, but later said that Amilcar attempted to steal a bike. It’s unclear what exactly happened during the interaction between Amilcar and SFPD, in which his life ended by gunshot wounds to the back of his body.

According to San Francisco Public Defender’s Office, “The City itself is moving painfully slow when it comes to getting answers for Amilcar’s family. After more than two years, the District Attorney has not released the results of his investigation. Charges have not been filed against a single officer. We believe justice delayed is justice denied,” said Tamara Aparton, the communications and policy assistant of the Defender’s Office.

ACTIVISM FOR JUSTICE AND REMEMBRANCE OF AMILCAR

Father Richard Smith, a faith leader, has been at the forefront in keeping Amilcar Perez-Lopez’s story alive. Over the past two years, Father Smith has helped organize press conferences, vigils, and marches in the Bay Area to recognize the tragic death of Amilcar. The efforts of his work seek out justice for Amilcar’s family and the community. In our interview with him, Father Richard Smith discussed the discrepancies between the autopsy report and SFPD statements. As an effort to bring about recognition and justice of Amilcar’s death, Father Richard Smith and other community advocates hold vigils each Wednesday outside of the Mission police station.

HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE LAW

It’s essential that the community be aware of their rights when having interac-

tions with the police. The Public Defender’s Office provided a helpful resource from the American Civil Liberties Union of Northern California which cites your rights when interacting with the police. Although this isn’t a remedy to combat decades of maladaptive behaviors by law enforcement, it is precursor for community members to fortify healthy relationships with law enforcement.

It’s been too often that we’ve heard stories such as Amilcar in which it seems justice has not prevailed. Aparton explained that it’s up to the Public Defender’s office to put the pressure on prosecutors to file charges against Amilcar’s killers. Community members, as well as public officials, should remember the humility that this young man’s life represented.

A recent conversation with Amilcar’s family reveals a sense of loss and grief. Don Juan Perez, Amilcar’s father, described his son as a hardworking young man that had a deep faith in divine power. His family members remember all the love and support that Amilcar had for his family. It’s evident that they are deeply saddened by his death and seek justice for Amilcar.

Amilcar did not die in vain because with the devotion to his family and his hope for a better tomorrow it inspires us all to live a life of gratitude. Thank you, Amilcar, for giving the people a voice of courage to stand against inhumane acts and injustices for all. ■

For more information or to get involved, go to justice4amilcar.org.

NO JOKE

BY SHERRY MEANS

Homeless and Sick, No Joke!!!!

If you have a Cold—you are constantly coughing, your throat issore, your chest hurts with every breath you take. Your body aches withevery step you take. You feel so cold that your teeth clatter uncontrollably. You have a headache that feels like you have fifty hammers pounding inside of your skull. If you have food you can’t eat, because your stomach achesand you throw up a yellow nasty tasting vomit most of the day. To be homeless and sick—No Joke!!!!

CLASSLESS SOCIETY

BY MIRA MARTIN-PARKER

Suits, ties, collars, cases, well-worn wingtips, tennis shoes, pastel tops, pearls, a pearl grey blazer, pumps, nylons, open toes, khaki pants, a blue button up, a printed dress, a sweater set, a Kate Spade bag, white shoes, white slacks, white hair up in a twist, jeans, sweatpants, during the daytime, downtown, a shopping cart, a military bag, yellow skin, matted hair, a flower, a smile, a cardboard sign, just trying to get home.

CALLING ALL ILLUSTRATORS AND COMIC ARTISTS!

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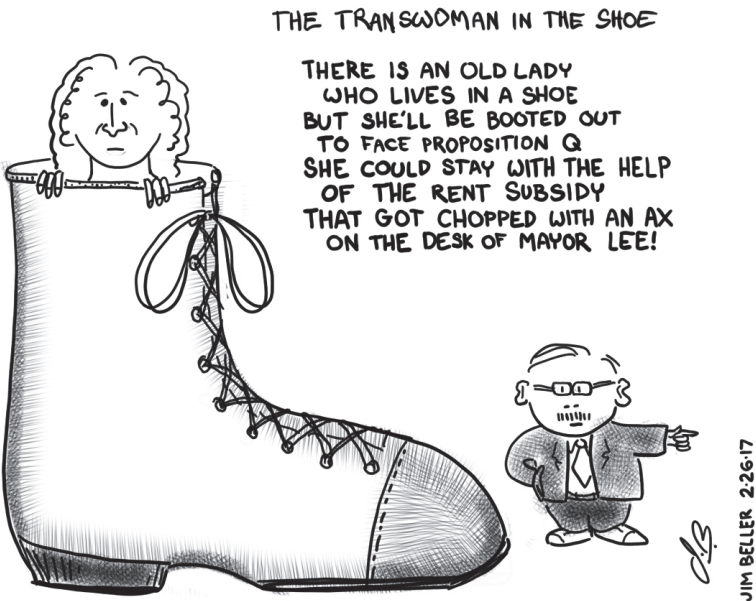
WRITING PROMPT

The emotional and physical labor of women is often exploited, invisibilized, or underappreciated. In honor of International Women’s Day, write a poem in appreciation of one woman in your life. How has she influenced you? What lessons have you learned from her? What should the world know about her—both good and not so good?

GHOSTLINE: Dear _____, because of you, I _____.
You taught me _____and _____and I will never forget _____

This writing prompt is brought to you by **GHOSTLINES**. Ghostlines is a Bay Area collective of poets, artists, and educators comprised of Ariana Weckstein, Gabriel Cortez, Isabella Borgeson, Jade Cho, and Natasha Huey. We are committed to using art to cultivate empathy. To disrupt violent systems and thought. To nurture and challenge ourselves and our communities to rise. WWW.GHOSTLINESCOLLECTIVE.TUMBLR.

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Helping us to reflect on the daily life of our streets, photographers donate their pictures that represent their personal take on the city.



PHOTO: LEONORE BAUD
WWW.LEONOREBAUD.NET

Spring 2015, Golden Gate Park, San Francisco

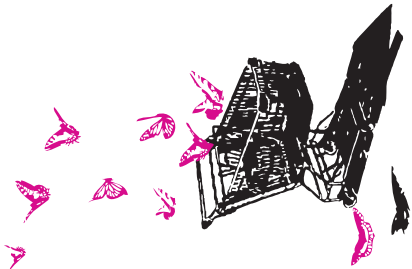
About the artist: After staying in San Francisco, the Swiss photographer Léonore Baud went in an artist residence in Berlin. The “scenes” she depicts become other than what they are intended to be, as she never totally complies with the situation she photographs. Focused on an artistic, rather than a descriptive approach, her work directly questions photography’s ability to faithfully capture reality. At first, her pictural approach which intended to grasp the constant transformation of space, slowly shifted toward a more human direction.

About the picture: Encountered in a group of runaway kids, the way the subject poses, the quality of light, and her expression transform this portrait into the more symbolic and iconic image of a contemporary madona. While through her simple beauty she expresses courage, pride, and resilience one may also sense a certain fragility and feel a possible sadness. ■

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